

Dr. Cecil A. Fayard
Elliott Baptist Church
June 15, 2003

Shake Me, I Rattle

I John 2:12-14

INTRO: I John 2:12-14 deals with spiritual birth and spiritual growth. Before there can be growth, there must be birth. After birth, growth is expected. God wants His children to grow. II Peter 3:18 says: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..."

God wants us to grow. He wants us to go from:

1. Buggies to chariots of fire,
2. Firecrackers to cannons,
3. Pygmies to giants,
4. Milk to meat.

God wants us to be healthy. He does not want us to be spiritually stunted. God wants His children to have a high spiritual I.Q.

I. VS 12, SPIRITUAL BIRTH

- A. "Little children" in the Greek is one word, *teknia* and means "little born ones."
 1. "Little children" speaks of all of those who have been born into the family of God. All of God's children are very dear to Him.
 2. Galatians 3:6-8 tells us that we become children of God just as Abraham did, by believing the Gospel.
- B. All of God's children have one thing in common. Without this common denominator, you cannot be a child of God. All of God's children have their sins forgiven. John said, "I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name sake."
 1. Every child of God can rejoice in the fact that their sins have been forgiven (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14).
 2. The Bible tells us what has happened to the believer's sins.
 - a) Psalm 103:12 tells us that when God forgives our sin, He removes them: "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."
 - b) When our sins are forgiven, God sees them no more. Isaiah 38:17 says: "thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."
- C. We are forgiven "for His name sake." Sinful man is forgiven because of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary (II Cor 5:21).
 1. If it were not for Jesus, you would never get to heaven. We are forgiven "for His name's sake."
 2. "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, sweetest name I know Fills my every longing, keeps me singing as I go."
- D. Lost friend, receive Christ today and become a child of God (Jn 1:12).

II. VSS 13-14, SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- A. In these verses, John speaks about little children, young men, and fathers. Since all of us were little children before we were anything else, this is where

we will begin.

1. The Greek word for “little children” in verse 13 is different from the word used in verse 12. The word used here is *paidia* and denotes “those who are infant in the Lord.” There spiritually immature children or as J. Vernon McGee calls them “immature little folks.”
2. These children know one thing. They know the father in salvation. They know they have been born and that is about it. That is about all that a new Christian knows; yet some folks expect a newborn to act like a Father.
3. Every church ought to want to be involved in spiritual obstetrics and spiritual pediatrics.
 - a) Spiritual obstetrics:
 - (1) Every church ought to want folks to be saved, to be born again. The church “must be interested in birthing children into God’s family. There is only one way a church is going to experience birthing spiritual babies, and it is what Isaiah said: ‘as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth children’” (vines 61).
 - (2) If a church wants to see spiritual births, then there must be travail, there must be weeping, and compassion for souls (Psa 126:5-6).
 - (3) We know that God does the saving, but the Gospel must be preached for the lost to be saved (II Thes 2:14). The church is to get the Gospel message to the lost.
 - b) Spiritual pediatrics:
 - (1) The church must also be involved in spiritual pediatrics. Babies need to grow and for this to happen, proper care must be given. Many churches bring newborn babies into the family, but never feed them and help them grow spiritually. As a church, we are responsible to feed the babes in Christ.
 - (2) Food– Every babe must have food. Since the baby cannot feed himself, we must feed him. Don’t cram steak down the babies’ throat. Start out with milk like the Gospels and later the steak of Revelation (I Pet 2:2).
 - (3) Air– Every baby needs air. And every Christian need prayer. Prayer is the Christian’s air.
 - (4) Exercise– The growing Christian must be busy for God. Get involved in the work of God. Get a pocketful of tracts and go to it.
 - (5) Atmosphere–Every new Christian needs a warm and friendly church home. No Christian needs to be left out in the cold. You can not mature as you should as a Christian without a good local church (Eph 3:21).
4. Babies need to mature. We expect them to mature. If they do not, then they are abnormal. The church at Corinth was filled with folks

who had not grown spiritually. Paul said: "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even unto babes in Christ." God wants His children to mature.

- a) Spiritual babies act like what they are— Babies.
 - (1) They are selfish, always wanting their way. And if they don't get it, they throw a fit.
 - (2) They get their feelings hurt easily and are jealous.
 - (3) They live to be served.
 - (4) They cry but never sing.
 - (5) They are talebearers. They repeat everything they hear.
 - (6) They puff up easily.
 - (7) They love praise.
 - (8) They easily get tired of their new toys.
- b) God wants you and I to grow up and be spiritually mature.

B. The next group of Christians I want to discuss are the "young men" (I Jn 2:14).

- 1. "I have written unto you young men, because you are strong."
 - a) One of the characteristics of the spiritual "young man" is strength.
 - b) As Christians, we are to be strong in spirit (Eph 6:10> Young believers, not necessarily young in age, have a freshness, a enthusiasm that says they are born again.
 - c) God wants us to be strong not weak.
 - (1) Every Christian ought to want to be strong spiritually.
 - (2) John said in III John 2: "Beloved I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." How strong would you be if this verse was true about you?
- 2. "The Word of God abideth in you" (I Jn 2:14).
 - a) To grow, we must let the Word of God "come to live" in us. That's what abiding means.
 - b) To be a mature Christian, you must be a Bible reading Christian.
 - c) To be strong, you must memorize the Word of God. It must abide in you (Psa 119:11).
- 3. I Jn 2:13 and 14 tells us that one of the characteristics of the spiritual "young man" is that he is an over comer. "Ye have overcome the wicked one."
 - a) The word used for wicked in the Greek is *poneros* from which we get our word pornography. *Poneros* refers to those who are going down the drain and want to take you with them. The Devil is headed down the drain, and he wants to drag you down.
 - b) The spiritually strong "young men" has the spiritual strength to overcome the wicked one. The strength to overcome by:

- (1) Faith (I Jn 5:4-5).
 - (2) Claiming the blood of Christ against our enemy (Rev 12:11a).
 - (3) Claiming the promises of the Word of God (Rev 12:11b).
 - c) Claim the victory and pull down the strongholds of Satan (II Cor 10:4-5).
 - d) Thank God for victory (I Cor 15:57).
- C. The third phase of spiritual development that John tells us about is that of fathers.
1. In vss 13 and 14, spiritual fathers are described as those who “have known him that is from the beginning.”
 - a) You get to know someone by living with them day by day. These spiritual fathers had walked with Jesus day by day for a long time.
 - b) The only way we can get to know God is by the Word of God and prayer. Although Paul was a great Apostle, he desired to know more about Jesus (Phil 3:10).
 2. Spiritual fathers are those who have children in the faith (I Tim 1:2).
 3. Kistemaker says this about John’s repetition of his description of a spiritual father: “because ye have known him that is from the beginning.” He says this, “discloses the seriousness of the author’s appeal; that is, the fathers cannot afford to relax the process of their spiritual growth” (268). We must continue to pray, to read, and to serve.

CONCLUSION: Are you growing in grace or are you still a baby?